

Massachusetts Water Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes for October 8, 1998

Commission Members in Attendance:

Mark P. Smith	Designee, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development
Mike Gildesgame	Designee, Department of Environmental Management
Arleen O'Donnell	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection
Mark S. Tisa	Designee, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement
Joe McGinn	Designee, Metropolitan District Commission
Joe Pelczarski	Designee, Office of Coastal Management
Gary Clayton	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Steven Asen	DEM
R.W. Breault	Town Administrator, North Truro
Kara Buzanoski	Assistant Director DPW, Northborough
Michele Drury	DEM
Duane LeVangie	DEP

Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report:

- **Update on Hopkinton's determination of insignificance for wastewater transferred from the Concord River basin to the Charles and Blackstone River basins.** Hopkinton is proposing to jointly develop a source with the Town of Ashland, in the Concord River basin. Most of Hopkinton is sewered back to the Concord River Basin, however a small amount will be discharged through onsite septic systems to the Charles and Blackstone River Basins, less than 1 million gallons per day. (Ashland is sewered by MWRA and will be applying separately for a full Interbasin Transfer approval). The Hopkinton application has been reviewed and more information is needed. Until the information is presented to the Commission the time frame of 90 days for a commission response has been suspended.
- **Stoughton will be submitting an application for an interbasin transfer**
- **Canton decision update:** More information is needed on their submitted water conservation plan. In addition, the town must still provide information on its current sewerage plans and conduct a feasibility study for in-basin sewerage. The feasibility study is due December 31, 1998.
- **The Neponset River Watershed Association, the Conservation Law Foundation are suing the Commission and the town of Canton.** Records have been submitted to the court and the case is moving along; a chance for settlement is being investigated.
- **Federal Clean Water Action Plan:** The federal government is asking states to put together an approach on how to identify watersheds that are in need of restoration or protection. Once they are identified, the federal government will provide extra money to these watersheds through the

section 319 grant program. Negotiations are ongoing with the federal government to recognize the Watershed Initiative in meeting their plan requirements, and hopefully the state can take advantage of the federal money.

- **Meeting of importance:** Mass Waterworks Association and the New England Waterworks Association meet with DEM and DEP concerning the performance standards and the screening documents being developed by DEP. They offered constructive criticism on how to make these documents more useful. They requested a unified approach for the approval of new water supply sources. This could be accomplished by designing a unified application for source water approval, interbasin transfers, Water Management Act, and the Wetlands Protection Act.
- **Update on the MWRA's Braintree-Weymouth interceptor Weymouth Basin.**
The Interceptor project will come before the commission as an interbasin transfer. MWRA has already requested bids for the project, and it should begin before January 1999. They will have to apply for their interbasin transfer approval before they start the entire project. DEM legal staff will be interpreting a clause concerning this project that was included in the House budget.
- **MWRA Water Supply Study:** Legislation provided \$300,000 to MWRA to study their ability to supply water to a number of communities south of their existing system. They should have results by April 1999.
- **DEP Water Reuse Policy Presentation:** At the next WRC Meeting, DEP will address the issue and how it relates to conservation, discharge at the closest point of withdrawal, and promoting reuse. New facility development will aim to have the water return to the source area for the water not to leaching fields. Proposals are being submitted from towns and golf courses to permit waste water reuse for beneficial use within environmental standards.

Agenda Item #2: Adoption of the Minutes of the September, 1998 meeting

Meeting minutes require changes and the clarification of comments, they will be voted on next meeting.

Agenda Item #3: First presentation; Water needs forecast for Provincetown

Michele Drury said there are several issues that arise from this application. Provincetown is using more water than registered and there is also a discrepancy in projected water use. Provincetown's private consultants projected a lower amount than DEM. The difference arises from the different population projections used by each source. Their water conservation program is good, they do not break down water by category. There is an issue distinguishing residential water use from commercial water use, such as the many B&B's. Unaccounted for water is very high at 30%, and this needs to be lowered.

- The town of Truro objects to Provincetown's application. The town of Truro's population growth has not been factored in to Provincetown's population forecast. This is a concern for Truro because they share the same small aquifer with Provincetown and therefore want to be a part of the application process. Truro residents are served by Provincetown water, which was established through legislation. Mark Smith requested to see the legislation and to have DEP's perspective.
- O'Donnell suggested seeing Truro's projection and viewing them against Provincetown to see how to manage the total demand on such a small aquifer. Smith questioned which projections would be used. Drury supported the use of DEM's projections to eliminate further reapplications, and the quality of DEM's numbers is known. DEM's projections include the portion of Truro's population currently served by Provincetown, but not increases for the entire town. The concern is that the total projected amount from Truro and Provincetown might be too

much stress on the aquifer. A safe yield study has not been done. Drury further suggested if DEM's numbers are used, to go back and include Truro projected population growth. Smith requested that the Cape Cod Commission be contacted for their perspective.

- There are two possible issues of non-compliance with the Water Management Act. Two possible wells being used are not permitted, and they are pumping beyond registered amounts. Provincetown has wastewater disposal problems and it was questioned how the increase in water will effect this. A lot more information is required for the Water Management Act application.

Agenda Item #4: First presentation; Water needs forecast for Northborough

Northborough is registered under the Act for 0.74 mgd for three local sources in the Concord basin, but currently has no permit. A new well, Howard Street, which was put on line in 1994, requires a Water management Act permit. One of the three registered wells (Lyman Street) has been inactive since 1989. The town is experiencing population growth in the section of town supplied by the Water Department. Therefore, the town is requesting a permit for the new Howard Street well and to withdraw in excess of their registered volumes in the Concord basin, as a portion of the overall forecast. Smith inquired that since some of their water is provided by MWRA, would the increase in the permit increase levels from both sources or just the local ones. Buzonski explained the increase would be for both sources. Asen pointed out that in the time between 1990-1997 there has been an increase in population, but due to water conservation there has been either a decrease or stability in water use. Conservation Kits have been provided to residences and underground irrigation systems are not allowed.

Smith inquired how much over the baseline is the peak use and would the permitted amount be used in the baseline water supply amount. The town replied that only when the peak amount exceeded 100,000 gallons would that trigger the need for the use of the permitted water.

The town has a package in place that will help with unaccounted for water. The existing computer program is outdated, and there is a meter registration problem that needs to be addressed. Residential water use could be higher than 62% but no more than 70%.

The Commission also inquired about the considerable commercial presence in Northborough and if the town could identify the commercial water uses. Town officials responded by saying they need to look into commercial uses more. Smith inquired if the town would be expanding the sewered area beyond the present 25%. Buzonski replied no. Smith also inquired if the 1.08 mgd is the source approval amount, and if the source safe yield meets the demand analysis. DEP responded the source amount has not been finalized, and the safe yield will not be known until the permit is granted.

The MWRA added comments that an increase in local sources, that is permitted by the WRC and is environmentally sound, be done before they take an increase in water from the MWRA. O'Donnell inquired that if the 20% unaccounted for water was reduced to 10%, how much would that effect the water need forecast. Gildesgame noted that the amount of water pumped would not change regardless, but if the loss is in real water, unaccounted for water could have an effect.

Agenda Item #5: Discussion: Public comments on Staff recommendation for interbasin Transfers

A trial time frame schedule was given by Drury, which assumed everything will occur within the number of days assigned. The concern in the schedule is that having the public comment on the same day as the staff recommendations will not give the public enough time to receive the recommendation and comment on it. A suggestion is to have two separate meetings or wait until after the Commission meeting on staff recommendations for the public hearing and comments. The extent of the impact of public comment on the staff recommendation was questioned. Drury answered that the staff will consider comments received through this process and evaluate them against the facts of the technical analysis and decide if the recommendation warrants amendment.

Smith supported the suggestion to have two public hearings, one in the receiving basin and the other in the donor basin, so both parties can comment. An option was suggested that seven days after the staff recommendation have the public meeting, and then have the staff make the appropriate adjustments based on the public comments, followed by another commission meeting. Gildesgame believes seven days is not sufficient enough time, that two weeks would be better. The two weeks will be added to the diagram and the procedure will be voted on next month.

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Minutes approved 4/8/99